

Development of a Web Page on Identifying and Managing Diseases of Vegetable Crops In NY

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Abstract

A new vegetable disease web site for the identification of diseases of vegetables was launched in 2000, and entitled "Vegetable MD Online." The site can be accessed at the following address: <http://ppathw3.cals.cornell.edu/Extension/VegetableDiseases/Home.htm>. Eventually the site will provide coverage of all major diseases of vegetables commonly grown in New York and in surrounding states in the Northeast. Many of the disease descriptions entered to date are based on the very successful Vegetable Fact Sheet series developed through Media Services at Cornell University. An important aspect of these Fact Sheets is the use of full color photographs depicting the most common signs and symptoms of vegetable diseases. Two other areas of importance covered in this site are the Photo Gallery and News Articles and Disease Alerts. Within the Photo Gallery, visitors can find additional pictures illustrating the diseases described, but not included, in the original Fact Sheet. This will be continually updated so that variations in disease appearance can be included. The News Article/Disease Alerts sections will be updated on a regular basis, and will include disease feature articles that agents can include in their service letters. Useful links to other web sites are provided in the left side menu bar.

Web Page Planning and Development

One of the main considerations for this web site was to make it as all-inclusive as possible, and yet maintain an ease of locating disease information on a crop-by-crop basis. We selected the "Veggie Babies" as the unifying banner. We wanted a clean cover page and a left-sided menu bar to remain visible while navigating the site. The sidebar should include only those topics that we felt were of most importance for the user. We began working with Dawn Dailey O'Brien, a part time employee in the Department of Plant Pathology, to design and develop the site.

Page Introduction (This was kept short to stay within the general proportions of the title page)

Welcome to the Cornell Plant Pathology Vegetable Disease Web Page. Vegetable MD Online was developed to provide access to the many Vegetable Disease Fact Sheets produced over the years by Media Services at Cornell. The addition of color photographs enhances the use of these sheets for plant disease diagnosis. Navigating through this web site is very easy. By clicking on Diseases by Crops on the sidebar, seed packets of your favorite vegetables appear, and by clicking on the crop of interest, a listing of the current fact sheets available is displayed. Magnification of the photos provided in each sheet is possible. A link is also provided to the Photo Gallery, which provides additional photographs not appearing in the original fact sheet. This will be updated on a regular basis, as the "typical symptoms" may not always appear every season. Information in this site is in a constant state of change. Thus reference to the News Articles/Disease Alerts will highlight recent changes in disease management guidelines and options, and also provide news items suitable for newsletter articles intended for Extension Educator's Service Letters. Finally, additional links to other useful sites are provided, including

the [Glossary](#), an On-line Glossary of Technical Terms in Plant Pathology and to the [Commercial Vegetable Guidelines](#). Please note the disclaimer at the bottom of the page. Pesticide registrations change over time, and mention of fungicides in older fact sheets does not imply that they are legal today.

Sidebar Components

We selected the following sidebar component to aid in navigating the site: Diseases By Crops; Photo Gallery, News Articles/Disease Alerts; Commercial Vegetable Guidelines; Diagnostic Keys; Glossary; Vegetable IPM Links; Other Vegetable Links; Plant Disease Clinic; and Contributors. [Diseases By Crops](#) allows quick access to the crops as depicted by seed packets (see attached figure). Clicking on the packets takes the viewer to the list of the currently available fact sheets, as well as notes on more recently available materials. Magnification of the photos provided in each fact sheet is possible. A comment received with the acceptance of the initial funding, was that Extension staff could benefit with additional pictures, perhaps illustrating a range of symptoms from the earliest visible symptom through to the more severe disease development. For the most part this has been accomplished with the addition of the [Photo Gallery](#). This category also allowed the inclusion of many more slides available in the author's archives. [News Articles/Disease Alerts](#) allows the inclusion of recent changes in disease management strategies and options that frequently change on an annual basis. The articles can be utilized by agents for inclusion in their Service Letters. Linkages will be provided to the [Commercial Vegetable Guidelines](#) to allow growers maximum usefulness in disease identification and control measures. [Diagnostic Keys](#) will be developed to assist growers in disease identification and reduce the opportunity for needless pesticide applications. This will be expanded to include diseases caused by abiotic factor as well as physiological disorders. The [Glossary](#) will provide access to the On-line Glossary of Technical Terms in Plant Pathology also developed in the Plant Pathology Department. [Vegetable IPM Links](#) and [Other Vegetable Links](#) will make the site more user friendly, and provide access to additional information. The [Plant Disease Clinic](#) link will provide up-to-date information on samples submitted for diagnosis.

Funding for this project and future plans

The initial planning for this Web site began in the spring of 2000 with funding provided by the New York State IPM Program. Additional funds were provided by a Smith-Lever grant. These initial funds were used to plan and develop the site, which is very much an ongoing process. An extensive amount of work remains to be done, as we have only begun the process of making this a comprehensive source for vegetable disease information. Suggestions for improvement are welcomed and should be sent to: Tom Zitter (taz1@cornell.edu) or Meg McGrath (mtm3@cornell.edu). The impact of the project on grower's pest management practices remains to be determined. Extension agents have been enthusiastic about the site, and have offered valuable suggestions. The site has been publicized at grower meetings and will be referenced in the 2001 issue of Commercial Vegetable Guidelines. The site will be a valuable resource for growers and the public, and should serve as a positive public relations effort on behalf of the NYS IPM program, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.